

INFANTRY CAREER NOTES



JOINT TASK FORCE CREDIT EXPANSION

More officers will be given credit for temporary Joint Task Force (JTF) deployments as a result of a credit expansion.

The JTF credit rule, approved upon release of the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act on December 28, 2001, was expanded to include operations conducted in an environment where an extremely fragile state of peace and a high potential for hostilities co-exist. Previously, the rule granted JTF credit only for service in a combat area of operations.

Officers eligible for credit must have served at least 90 consecutive days on the JTF headquarters staff (not in subordinate organizations or service components), be in the rank of captain, filling a major billet or above, and be on the "active duty list" affected by joint officer management legislation and policy. Reserve component members and "professional" specialties are excluded.

Joint duty credit is not automatically awarded, but it may be recommended for officers who meet the criteria.

Eligible officers should submit a credit nomination package with a memo and enclosure noting service data. The memo should include a summary recommendation for cumulative Joint Duty Assignment credit, identify nominee(s) by name and grade, dates of JTF service, number of days served, and name of specific JTF.

Officers should also provide an enclosure detailing nominees' service data and position identification. The officer's personal and position identification information, grade at the time of the JTF assignment, career specialty, JTF headquarters arrival and departure dates, duty location and contact information, as well as source documenta-

tion are essential to the processing of the nomination package.

Source documentation includes the officer record brief, award citation, and travel orders and vouchers. Multiple officer requests may be consolidated into a single submission; however, each request must contain a separate summary in the prescribed format.

Retroactive joint service credit for duty applies to the following operations during the respective time periods:

Operation Northern Watch

Aug. 1, 1992 – To Be Determined

Operation Southern Watch

Aug. 27, 1992 – TBD

Operation Able Sentry

June 26, 1993 – Feb. 28, 1999

Operation Joint Endeavor

Dec. 25, 1995 – Dec. 19, 1996

Operation Joint Guard

Dec. 20, 1996 – June 20, 1998

Nomination packages must be received at the Total Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) no later than November 1, 2002. The memo should be addressed to the CDR, PERSCOM, ATTN: TAPC-OPB-J (MAJ Leven Pressley-Sanders); 200 Stovall Street; Alexandria, VA 22332-0411.

Army officers are advised to contact MAJ Pressley-Sanders, joint policy officer, at DSN 221-8129 or (703) 325-8129, or email presslel@hoffman.army.mil for further information about the process.

ALL BNCOC GRADUATES NOW GET 40 PROMOTION POINTS

Soldiers who successfully completed the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC) are now awarded 40 promotion points, effective August 1, 2002.

Soldiers will no longer receive four

promotion points for each week of BNCOC. This change reduces administrative mistakes and levels the playing field for BNCOC graduates with similar military occupational specialties (MOSs).

Under the previous system, when soldiers completed both phases of BNCOC—common-core and MOS-specific—they submitted two forms of the Department of the Army 1059 to their Personnel Support Branch for points. Then the PSB clerk decided how many points a soldier got. For example, if phase one was five weeks and three days and phase two was two weeks and two days, one clerk might give 32 points for eight weeks, while another might give 28 points for seven weeks. Implementing a 40-point standard means there is no room for interpretation.

Some soldiers may have the perception that they are going to lose points because their particular BNCOC is longer than 10 weeks, but that is not true. The point system applies to every soldier in the MOS, and the cut-off score reflects that. Soldiers will still be competing against others in their MOS, and everyone in that MOS will have 40 points.

The soldiers most affected are those who are in MOSs that have merged, such as some in the medical field, and others that are planned to merge under the implementation of ADS XXI initiatives. The latter implementation was designed to consolidate MOSs with similar functions. Last year several medical skills were combined under the 91W umbrella. After the merger, some soldiers had promotion points based on a 12-week BNCOC class while others had points based on an eight-week course. Other potential mergers include Personnel Administrative Specialists (75B) and Personnel Services Special-

ists (75H) who would be redesignated 42A.

Merging light-wheel vehicle mechanics (63S) and wheel-vehicle repairers (63W) has been proposed. While the wheel-vehicle repairers would lose 43 points if the merger goes through, each of the soldiers—who would be competing with one another for promotion—would receive the same number of promotion points for BNCOC completion. This would eliminate inequities based solely on their BNCOC length. With BNCOC being treated as an equal element, similar MOSs are merged, and no one is at a disadvantage.

In July 2002 all personnel support battalions began converting the BNCOC points and adjusting promotion points. Soldiers will not have to do anything.

ASSIGNMENTS ON LINE

Effective July 1, 2002, Army officers can now submit their assignment preference statements on the Internet by accessing the U.S. Army Personnel Command homepage. The online preference statement will enable officers to view open valid requisitions that assignment managers are working to fill.

In the past, officers have only been able to see open assignments on various branch web sites. Now they will have a broader view of the positions available and to evaluate the special requirements before making a choice.

Branch, grade, and area of concentration are the considerations governing the information that is shown on the preference statement. Officers can make selections specifically by valid and open requisitions, by location or by specific duty such as joint, ROTC, or recruiting. The assignment manager will then be able to see this information as he walks through the decision proc-

ess for filling a requisition.

With the preference statement, officers can better participate in the decisions that affect their careers, and help streamline and improve the responsiveness of the officer assignment process.

Officers can select their preferences on the PERSCOM homepage by clicking on the officer preference statement dog tag.

VEAP CONVERTS TO GI BILL MAY LOSE BENEFITS

Soldiers who converted from the Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) to the Montgomery GI Bill are at risk of forfeiting their contributions and losing their benefits if they fail to make their payments.

Soldiers have 18 months from the time they signed the Montgomery GI Bill, Department of Defense Form 2366, to pay the mandatory contribution of \$2,700.

Many of the 5,000 soldiers who signed up for the program may have already missed their deadlines, according to officials at the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command. Program participants need to contact their finance offices and make sure the contribution will be paid within the 18-month deadline.

If soldiers are not able to pay the \$2,700 in time by using monthly allotments, they have the option of combining the allotment with a lump sum, or they can make a single lump sum payment.

The law states that if participants don't pay the contribution in full within the allotted time, they forfeit anything they contributed to VEAP and will not be eligible for any education benefits through the Veterans Administration.

It is imperative that soldiers look at the date they signed their DD Form

2366 and make sure they have the contribution paid in full within 18 months of that date. To date, the VA has not made any exceptions to the deadline.

VEAP was first enacted by Congress for post Vietnam-era soldiers. It was designed to attract high quality men and women to the all-volunteer Armed Forces. Congress signed the VEAP conversion law on October 30, 2000, making it the second conversion opportunity since October 1996. (Submitted by Tesia Williams, PERSCOM Public Affairs Office.)

"DIGITAL SENDERS" SPEEDING ACTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Processing awards and other personnel records in faraway places is getting easier with the help of "digital senders," according to personnel officials supporting Operation *Enduring Freedom*.

A digital sender from Fort Bragg is up and running in Uzbekistan, and two have been set up in Afghanistan. The number of digital senders should increase to 100 by the end of the year.

A digital sender looks like a fax machine and acts similarly in sending awards, evaluations, and other documents directly to a soldier's official military personnel file. A personnel section can send a Bronze Star award citation from the field one day and see it online the following day.

There are now 30 digital senders at Fort Lewis, Fort Bragg, Korea, Germany, and Afghanistan. A sender from Germany arrived recently in Kosovo to support 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, soldiers deployed there from Schweinfurt. And another is enroute to Kuwait to support soldiers there. The number of senders in the Army should reach 100 by the end of the year.